

WASHINGTON- Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) announced that the Alabama Air National Guard 117th Air Refueling Wing will receive \$2 million in funding for a facility that will allow pilots and maintenance crews to more effectively respond to global assignments.

The Alert Quarters project will be built at the Birmingham Air National Guard Base. The 4400 square foot center will replace two small trailers now being used by crews preparing for Operation Noble Eagle duties.

Combined with Bachus' previous announcement of \$2.3 million in funding for a Mobility Processing Center at the unit, it brings the recent federal investment in the operations of the 117th Air Refueling Wing to \$4.3 million.

Congressman Bachus said, "The men and women of the 117th Aircraft Refueling Wing stand ready to serve 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Alert Quarters project will help ensure that they are able to quickly mobilize to meet their duties. Whereas just a few years ago we had to fight hard during BRAC process just to keep the 117

th in Birmingham, we are now seeing major investments in its operations. That is because the 117th

has repeatedly demonstrated that it is one of the premier air refueling units in the military with value second to none."

Colonel Steve Berryhill, the Commander of the 117th Air Refueling Wing, said, "The operational tempo of the 117th Air Refueling Wing has dramatically increased over the past decade. With our commitments to Homeland Defense, our increased deployments abroad, and our newly assigned active duty squadron here at the 117th

ARW, this much-needed funding will replace our dated mobile temporary facilities for our Operation Noble Eagle missions. It will also dramatically decrease our time on the ground for deployments with a new Mobility Processing Center. This funding will allow the dedicated men and women on this Wing to more effectively and efficiently perform their duties, thereby making the 117th

even more invaluable for the State of Alabama and our great country."

The Department of the Air Force said it will fund the work through Military Construction Appropriations Act monies. Construction on the facilities, which could begin as early as fall, is expected to take six months to a year to complete.